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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, we bask in the warmth of Your glory. You uphold the universe by the words of Your power today.

Today, walk with our Senators as they work. Help them to remember that there is no purity without vigilance, no learning without study, and no mastery without discipline. Lord, give them the wisdom to be willing to pay the price to honor You. Provide them with joy in service and devotion in discipleship. Infuse them with a spirit of power, love, and self-control.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent for 1 minute in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BANGLADESH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, an op-ed I penned recently mentioned countries that still have blasphemy laws on the books, and it touched a nerve in Bangladesh. I certainly didn't mean to imply that it was the worst offender, and I commend Bangladesh for its support of almost 1 million Rohingya Muslim refugees who are

fleeing Burma. Bangladesh's secular government has also taken steps to prosecute perpetrators of religious-based crimes.

However, a 2016 report by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom found that religious and civil society groups in Bangladesh fear increasing religious extremism. Moreover, some Bangladeshi leaders have warned that violators of the blasphemy laws would be prosecuted.

Bangladesh and the 68 other countries that still have blasphemy laws on the books should repeal these laws. That is why I am cosponsoring a resolution, S. Res. 458, calling on the global repeal of blasphemy laws.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

S. 2657

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, this week, the Senate has a good opportunity to update the laws governing the way we harness and deploy America's tremendous domestic energy resources. It has been well over a decade since the last time comprehensive energy legislation was signed into Federal law.

Following our overwhelming vote yesterday to proceed to consideration of the American Energy Innovation Act, the Senate is on track to change that very soon. The American Energy Innovation Act put forward by Chairman MURKOWSKI and Ranking Member MANCHIN is thoroughly bipartisan. It contains provisions sponsored or cosponsored by more than 60 of our colleagues. It has come to include 50 individual pieces of legislation that the Energy and Natural Resources Committee considered last year.

Over the past 3 years, the Trump administration and this Congress have

worked together to secure historic advances for both the producers and consumers of affordable domestic energy. We have opened access to new energy reserves, streamlined the regulation of liquid natural gas exports, and halted or reversed the most egregious Obama-era regulatory burdens. The growing record is clear. We have helped to usher in a prosperous new era of U.S. energy independence.

The legislation we are considering this week is designed to build on those successes. It takes proactive steps to ensure the security, efficiency, and affordability of American energy for years to come.

First, it puts a strong tailwind behind programs, grants, and research efforts that are focused on energy innovation. That means significant investments in improving energy efficiency and grid storage technologies; new resources for the development of renewable geothermal, nuclear, and other energy sources to help sustain domestic energy independence; reauthorization for the Department of Energy's cutting-edge research at the Advanced Research Projects Agency; and a renewed commitment to carbon capture, utilization, and storage at coal production facilities.

In addition to energy innovation, the legislation also focuses on energy security. Since the last comprehensive update to the Federal energy laws in 2007, our Nation's critical infrastructure, including the electric grid, has changed significantly, and so have the threats it faces. Our colleagues' legislation tackles this head-on. It introduces incentives for electrical grid modernization and cyber security projects. It encourages utility providers to take proactive measures to protect ratepayers from the devastating effects of potential cyber attacks. It makes new technical cyber security assistance available to municipalities and rural utilities and authorizes grant funding for on-the-job workforce retraining.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Perhaps most importantly, the legislation before us is not only designed for continued advances in areas where the U.S. energy sector has seen success, it is also meant to take a sober assessment of where we are falling short.

As my colleague Chairman MURKOWSKI noted yesterday, the United States currently relies on foreign imports to meet our demand for dozens of mineral commodities. We are talking about rare substances with critical applications in manufacturing, energy production, and national security. These are critical products, but at present, domestic production does not satisfy domestic demand. That is why this legislation provides for new survey and cataloging efforts to identify new domestic supplies of important materials. It invests in extraction technologies that would harness existing mining infrastructure in places like Appalachian coal country to help meet the demand.

As the senior Senator from Kentucky, I know the importance of these investments firsthand. The working families and job creators in my State know that clean coal technologies and longstanding mining operations can continue to add tremendous value to the security and prosperity of our Nation.

There is a reason why this legislation has earned widespread praise from the researchers and energy industry leaders who would be affected the most. It is a product of serious, good-faith, bipartisan work. That is why organizations from the National Mining Association to the Environmental Defense Fund have found common ground in endorsing it.

I will have more to say about this legislation in the coming days, but right now, I am grateful for our colleagues on the Energy Committee for their work in bringing it to the floor. I look forward to considering their important legislation in the days ahead, and I would encourage all Members to join me in supporting this excellent work.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

ADVANCED GEOTHERMAL INNOVATION LEADERSHIP ACT OF 2019—MOTION TO PROCEED—RESUMED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to

proceed to S. 2657, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to S. 2657, a bill to support innovation in advanced geothermal research and development, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic Leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, the number of confirmed coronavirus cases in the United States has recently surpassed 100. As more Americans are tested in the days and weeks to come, that number is expected to increase. Just this morning, we learned that a second New Yorker, from New Rochelle in Westchester County, has contracted the virus and is in serious condition and currently in a New York hospital. Our prayers are with him and his family.

This only underlines the urgent need to respond to the coronavirus on a national scale. The only appropriate response in Congress is to come together quickly and in a bipartisan fashion to deliver the resources and authorities our Federal agencies need to track and combat the virus, treat Americans with the disease, and develop a vaccine and additional treatments. We also must aid the States and localities in their efforts to deal with the disease because they are on the frontlines.

I am glad that Congress is headed in that direction. I expect that, today, appropriators will announce an agreement on an emergency, bipartisan funding package to deal with the coronavirus. The agreement is expected to include between \$7 billion and \$8 billion of funding—very close to the \$8.5 billion that we Senate Democrats requested last week—and over four or five times the amount of new funding initially proposed by the administration.

That is good news. When it comes to Americans' health and safety, there is no reason to be penny wise and pound foolish. If the bean counters at OMB unnecessarily cut the money we need, it will cost us more in the long run. It is far better to get our public health professionals, experts, and agencies the funding they need, up front and all together, rather than be forced to pass additional appropriations in the coming months. We may have to, but we ought not skimp now. If we did skimp, the scenario would make no sense. Yet, left to its own devices, that is what the administration would have done. So I

am glad we pushed them earlier, despite the fact that President Trump didn't want to hear anything contrary to what he was proposing.

I am pleased that both parties in Congress, in both Houses of Congress, are coming together to do the responsible thing. I hope and expect that we can pass the emergency appropriations through the Senate before the end of the week.

As Congress does what is necessary to respond to the coronavirus, unfortunately, the Trump administration's efforts leave much to be desired. While the Trump administration's response is slow, halting, loose with the facts, and President Trump blames everyone but himself, Congress—Democrats and Republicans, House and Senate—are acting like the adults in the room. We are not letting President Trump's accusations and nastiness, his false statements and his inability to really grapple with the problem—and, instead, try to brush it away—get in our way of doing what America needs to have done and done immediately.

Congressional appropriators have had to include provisions in the emergency bill to prevent the administration from stealing funds from other public health and disease programs to fight the coronavirus. That is what the White House wanted to do. Test kits were not as widely available or accurate as they should have been in the early days of the coronavirus outbreak. POLITICO reported this morning that the administration was very slow to develop an accurate test for coronavirus and slow to allow hospitals and public health labs to develop that on their own.

The emergency funding bill seeks to deal with these two issues. It explicitly funds laboratory testing. We may have to do even more in the weeks to come, but that is no reason not to immediately give a generous appropriation so that testing can be done. Every day we delay testing, every time a person who needs a test doesn't get one, is a day and a time when the virus gets worse and worse and worse and can spread.

There are still major issues with the lack of testing infrastructure that is being provided by the administration. States and cities still don't have enough tests, and yesterday we heard from the National Indian Health Board that the Indian Health Service and Tribal health facilities are being left behind in the coronavirus response and have received few, if any, resources. That is unacceptable.

Meanwhile, as Congress works—Democrats and Republicans, House and Senate—to come up with a strong, comprehensive bill with the necessary dollars, President Trump continues to spread rumor, loose speculation, and happy talk. If any member of the administration tells the President something optimistic, he repeats it and exaggerates it to the point of absurdity. The President said the disease might magically “disappear” once the weather gets warmer and promised that the